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Letter dated 27 July 2010 from the Chairman of the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as Chairman of the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, I have the honour to submit the report of the Working Group (see annex).

It would be appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yukio **Takasu**
Chairman of the Security Council Working Group
on Peacekeeping Operations

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Annex

Report of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations

I. Introduction

1. The Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations met four times during March, May and June 2010 to consider the issue of key gaps in capabilities, resources and training that need to be closed in order to effectively implement Security Council mandates. The Working Group invited a total of 30 countries and organizations, including troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries, members of the Bureau of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to three of the meetings.

2. The Working Group discussed the following three issues: (a) civilian capacity gaps; (b) military capacity gaps; and (c) coordination and partnership for capacity development. Discussions were based on concrete case studies of United Nations peacekeeping missions, such as the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) in the context of civilian capacity, and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in the context of military capacity.

II. Summary of the discussions held in the meetings

3. The major points made by participants are summarized below.

1. Identification of capacity gaps in implementing United Nations peacekeeping mandates

4. In terms of civilian capacity, it was highlighted that there is a growing need for expertise in areas such as justice and the rule of law, police, corrections, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and mine action. Restoration of State authority, institution-building, public administration, and early economic revitalization present additional critical gaps that need to be addressed. In that regard, improving recruitment and training and amending human resource rules to obtain civilian expertise were cited as being particularly important, especially when mission mandates contain a number of peacebuilding elements. The need to leverage capacity from the global South, in the light of the specific expertise and cultural advantages it may possess, were reiterated.

5. Participants looked forward to the findings of the review of civilian capabilities, which is being conducted by the Peacebuilding Support Office. The importance of keeping the Working Group informed of this process was emphasized.

6. In terms of military capacity, it was noted that the implementation of complex mandates such as the protection of civilians and election support, required an unprecedented level of capabilities, including mobility, information-gathering, level II hospitals and communication skills. The enhancement of the peacekeepers' skills, especially those of staff officers, was also cited as being vitally important.

7. The existence of a critical shortage in military utility helicopters in various United Nations peacekeeping missions was reiterated. The need for a comprehensive review of the situation and its causes by the relevant United Nations bodies was noted.

8. Participants stressed the importance of filling critical short-term gaps which constitute immediate and existing obstacles to the implementation of the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations, while also pursuing measures that develop the capacity of the Organization to conduct peacekeeping operations over the long term. It was noted that donor countries could play a leading role in such long-term efforts for strengthening United Nations peacekeeping capacity.

9. Utilizing benchmarks for the development of the capability of countries where United Nations peacekeeping missions are under way was stressed. It was emphasized that benchmarks should be developed through close consultation with host countries and other concerned parties. It was also highlighted that, in order for benchmarks to be effective, they should contain proper qualitative, not only quantitative, indicators. The need for continuous improvement in the development of benchmarks, including through the sharing of best practices, was underlined.

2. Capacity-building support and enhancement of training

10. In order to develop the rapid deployment capacity of civilian expertise, it was stressed that the United Nations would need to have more standing capacity, as well as an improved roster system, including interoperability of the rosters of the United Nations and the regional organizations.

11. In order to ensure that all the components of peacekeeping missions operate coherently, it was stressed that senior United Nations leadership needed to possess strong management skills. In that regard, it was also noted that there was a need to ensure that the Secretariat possessed the necessary civilian and police planning capacities.

12. In order to enhance the quality of training for peacekeepers, it was stressed that standardization and modularization of training was important. It was underlined that training should include predeployment training as well as in-mission and mobile training.

3. Enhancement of coordination among the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop-contributing countries, police-contributing countries and other stakeholders, in particular the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Fifth Committee, to fill capability gaps within the United Nations

13. In order for the "gap list" to be used more effectively in matching supply and demand of personnel, equipment, training and financing, the need for a coordination platform was reiterated.

14. It was stressed that it was important to continue and to enhance bilateral and trilateral arrangements to support existing and potential troop- and police-contributing countries.

15. In addition, the importance of pooling regional expertise and possible inter-mission cooperation was highlighted.

4. Development of partnerships with actors outside of the United Nations

16. It was noted that various regional organizations, such as the European Union, the African Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, were in the process of establishing cooperation mechanisms. Global coordination among such regional organizations and the United Nations could be utilized in order to pool resources, improve interoperability and provide opportunities to learn best practices.

17. In that regard, it was reiterated that there should be better coordination of training efforts of all relevant actors, including with national and regional training centres, contributing Member States and the Secretariat.

III. The way forward

18. Based on the above, the Working Group will take the following actions within its mandate for enhancing understanding of gaps in both military and civilian capability.

1. Measures to enhance coordination among the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop-contributing countries, police-contributing countries and other stakeholders, in particular the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Fifth Committee, to fill capability gaps

19. In order to enhance awareness and understanding of the impact of gaps in peacekeeping operations and the effective use of the "gap list", the Working Group will organize meetings for the remainder of 2010, with the participation of relevant stakeholders, in order to review gaps at individual peacekeeping missions. At the beginning of 2011, the Working Group will reassess the way forward:

(a) Sessions will be held to consider the capacity gaps of United Nations peacekeeping missions before the expiration of their mandates. The timing of the sessions will be determined, taking into account the programme of work of the Council and the Working Group;

(b) The "gap list" will be regularly revised by the Secretariat and shared with the Working Group for its discussions;

(c) The meetings, which provide an opportunity for a joint review of the gap list and the sharing of experiences among relevant troop-contributing countries, potential contributors and the Secretariat, may also be used to identify contributors to fill critical gaps. During the meetings, the Working Group may also consider how to improve the timely mobilization and deployment of human and other resources;

(d) To facilitate understanding of the problem of obtaining military utility helicopters at UNOCI, UNMIS, UNAMID and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the Working Group requests the Secretariat to further review the matter and inform it of the causes and the impacts of the gap in military utility helicopters at each of the above missions.

20. The Working Group will continue to follow the work on the review of international civilian capacities to improve coordination to fill gaps in civilian capacity.

2. Measures to develop partnerships, including with actors outside the United Nations

21. The Working Group will continue to discuss issues related to longer-term capability development, including through support for the training initiatives of international or regional organizations and training centres or associations, as well as for efforts at the global level that strengthen synergies between peacekeeping requirements and capacity-building efforts, including through a clearing house mechanism.

3. How to utilize benchmarks for capacity development

22. The Working Group will discuss "transitional strategies" as its second theme for 2010. Within that discussion, the Working Group will consider best practices among United Nations peacekeeping missions, in particular best practices for utilizing benchmarks.